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PRESS RELEASE

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Statement by Secretary Kerry on Nigerian Election Results

The United States congratulates the people of Nigeria and the Nigerian Government on historic and largely peaceful elections the weekend of March 28. We especially applaud all voters who showed patience and demonstrated their commitment to participate in the democratic process.

The United States commends Nigeria's Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and its Chairman, Attahiru Jega, on the generally orderly vote, on the use of technology such as card readers to increase the credibility and transparency of the electoral process, and on prompt communication of the results. While we note reports of logistical problems, such incidents did not undermine the overall outcome of the election.

In January, I traveled personally to Nigeria and met with both President Jonathan and now President-Elect Buhari. At that time, I emphasized that for the United States, Nigeria is an increasingly important strategic partner and that Nigeria has a critical role to play in the security and prosperity of this continent and beyond.

I also said that it was imperative that these elections are an improvement over past elections and that they need to set a new standard for this democracy. That means that Nigerians needed to not only reject violence but actually promote peace.

We laud both President Jonathan and General Buhari for their public commitments to the Abuja Accord signed in January and reaffirmed March 26, respecting the official results, and encouraging their supporters to do the same. We commend President Jonathan for his years of service and for having acted in the best interest of his country. We welcome President Jonathan's calls for unity and calm during this transition period.

Finally, we extend our congratulations to President-elect Buhari. The United States reiterates its commitment to working with the newly elected government that emerges from this democratic process.

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